The Aspects of Ethnopedagogy in the Professional Development and Continuing Education of Teachers

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Abstract: The contemporary world is characterized by the rapid pace of globalization and digitization, complex processes that, in the absence of a cultural filter, can lead to the erosion of national identity. In this context, teacher training cannot be limited to the acquisition of modern technological and methodological skills; rather, it requires a deep grounding in fundamental values that define our identity. Viewed as an essential component of the people's spiritual culture, folk pedagogy provides historical and moral guidelines that are indispensable to today's schools. This paper analyzes the purpose, functions, and formative and practical aspects of ethnopedagogy in the process of professional development and continuing education for teachers. In the contemporary educational paradigm, the rediscovery and integration of the values of folk culture represent a strategic resource for strengthening cultural identity and developing teachers' cross-curricular competencies. By harnessing the potential of ethnopedagogy, the educational process regains its humanistic dimension, connecting pedagogical innovation to the community's cultural roots.

Keywords: ethnopedagogy; professional development; educational aspects; teachers

1. Introduction

In a contemporary educational context marked by the dynamics of sociocultural change and the challenges of globalization, the role of the teacher goes beyond the

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mere transmission of knowledge, evolving into that of a facilitator of values and cultural identity. Human society is constantly faced with various societal challenges that manifest themselves at the global and/or local levels. Based on the famous aphorism "knowledge is power," as stated by Francis Bacon, we understand that in a dynamic and challenging environment, knowledge becomes the primary tool for adaptation and development. Thus, openness to the new in culture and its appreciation must stem from openness to the values of the past, and openness to universality—from openness to the national and the specific. Without a solid local or national foundation, connecting to the universal risks leading to a loss of identity. And identity is not a fixed given, but a dynamic process that is constantly being constructed and redefined throughout one's entire life. The Romanian poet and philosopher L. Blaga—in his "Trilogy of Culture"—notes that identity is formed at the intersection of interiority (what you feel and choose to be) and exteriority (the influence of family, education, culture, and the historical context in which you live) (Blaga, 1985, p. 98). Under these circumstances, we understand just how important education remains in all its aspects. At the same time, the new radical transformations in all spheres of society have highlighted the need to reexamine the potential of the Romanian people's wisdom as a fundamental factor in the rebirth of national consciousness, in conjunction with the pedagogical traditions passed down from generation to generation. No national revival is possible without the revival of educational traditions in the broadest sense. At the same time, we cannot fail to mention the negative consequences of globalization on national cultures. In the context of globalization, *ethnopedagogy* is becoming an essential pillar of intercultural education. It does not promote cultural isolation, but rather helps students understand their own roots so that they can subsequently respect the diversity of other cultures. While globalization tends toward cultural homogenization, ethnopedagogy preserves local identity by drawing on traditions and folk wisdom. National character, work, wisdom, and morality are key elements upon which the democratic pedagogical thesis is based, and which form the foundation of true educational practice. ***Ethnopedagogy*** is the foundation of scientific pedagogy, which continues to inspire the work of scholars, poets, and writers today, maintaining the connection between the present and the culture of the past. Researchers in the field (Y. Bromley, N. Silistraru, and others) note that ethnopedagogy is an interdisciplinary field at the intersection of pedagogy, anthropology, and ethnography. In this context, researchers Y. Bromley (1984) and E. Hristova (1989). I define it from an interdisciplinary perspective, situating it at the intersection of ethnography, cultural anthropology, ethnic psychology, and general pedagogy. The authors mentioned above emphasize that ethnopedagogy

examines ***the specific characteristics of each ethnic group*** in shaping children's behavior and mindset. It studies the traditional educational cultures of various peoples and the way in which folk wisdom influences personality development. It is essential to note that, from the perspective of ethnopedagogy, the development of personality prioritizes *human-society* interaction, organizational skills, the ability to behave courteously in social situations, taking care of one's own belongings and shared property, using proper language, and participating in the activities of the group to which the individual belongs. Strengthening the child's relationship with this value system is achieved through the process of internalization, which results from the symbiosis between cognitive, affective, and volitional aspects, and aims to reduce negative behaviors and promote communication and social interaction. In fact, correcting negative behaviors in ethnopedagogy is not based on physical punishment or isolating the child, but rather on *prevention*, social shame, *leading by example*, and correction through metaphor and folklore. Thus, in folk pedagogy, deviating from the norm is viewed as a disruption of the community's "order." Furthermore, in folk pedagogy, correcting behavior does not begin with the imposition of punishment, but rather with the prevention of wrongdoing through the early instillation of a sense of shame, humanity, and the fear of "bringing shame upon one's family," according to N. Silistraru in his work *Ethnopedagogy*. Silistraru (2006) also points out that: "The traditional community did not use written laws to punish misconduct, but rather collective opinion. "*What will people say*?" or "*village gossip*" were the most powerful tools for curbing negative impulses and reeducating the individual". Also relevant to this study is the opinion of researcher G. Volkov, who notes: "In ethnopedagogy, evil is never abstract; it takes the form of laziness, cunning, greed, or pride, and is always punished through ridicule or defeat in fairy tales, so that the child can observe for themselves the natural consequences of deviant behavior" (Bromley, 1984)**.** These emphasize values such as work and diligence ("work ennobles a person"); dignity and honor ("a clear conscience"), as well as humanity and honesty. Our ancestors were concerned with maintaining a good reputation in the community; for this reason, they placed great emphasis on keeping one's word and taking responsibility for one's actions. Author M. Ioanioglo notes that, at present, most concepts of traditional pedagogy need to be adapted to the new conditions or radically modified, because modern pedagogy is not limited solely to the guidance, training, and personality development of the learner, but also extends to factors of change, adaptation, and transformation (Ianioglo & Vlah, 2025).

From the general provisions of the Education Code of the Republic of Moldova, Article 4, we can glean insights regarding the importance of realizing the ideal and educational objectives, the development of national consciousness and identity, and the promotion of universal human values and society's aspirations for European integration. The distinguished Chuvash academic G. Volkov (2010), who is considered the founder of ethnopedagogy as a scientific discipline (he introduced the term into scientific discourse in the 1960), defines ethnopedagogy as "*the science of the people's pedagogical experience*," of folk ideas, opinions, and methods of education. In his view, ethnopedagogy is a discipline that preserves and systematizes empirical knowledge of an ethnic group regarding the education, moral upbringing, and socialization of the younger generation. At the same time, G. Volkov argued that "preserving the educational traditions of each people does not isolate ethnic groups", but lays the foundation for harmonious cultural dialogue and mutual respect among nations". Along the same lines are the studies by the renowned Ukrainian educator M. Stelmachovici (1985), who approaches ethnopedagogy as "scientifically grounded folk pedagogy". For the author, it is the discipline that analyzes the mechanisms of knowledge transmission, skills and values from one generation to the next through folklore (proverbs, sayings, ballads, stories) and traditional rituals. For the Romanian/Moldovan context, the research conducted by N. Silistraru is significant; it treats ethnopedagogy as an educational theory and practice grounded in ethnoculture, national values, folklore, and family traditions. Researcher N. Silistraru (2005) emphasizes that ethnopedagogy ensures the continuity of cultural identity and shapes the moral profile of the personality by connecting the individual to his or her ethnic heritage. As L. Blaga (1985) noted: "The Romanian soul moves against a backdrop of rolling hills, in an undulating landscape, where it sings its doina of longing and sorrow.", and M. Eminescu spoke of the Romanian "ethnic organism," based on historical continuity, the Romanian language, and the preservation of ancestral traditions. C. Rădulescu-Motru's research follows the same line of thought: he refers to "*energetic personalism*," emphasizing that the Romanian character combines a traditional agrarian background with the ability to adapt to modernity (Cucoș, 2000).

We believe it is important to note that ***the goal*** of ethnopedagogy is to *preserve cultural identity and incorporate traditional values into the modern educational process*. We emphasize that ethnic values should have significance—socially, professionally, and personally. According to researcher M. Hadîrcă, ethnic values are "shared by all those who belong to an ethnic group, nation, state, and society as a whole; therefore, they must recognized, explained, protected, and promoted

through all forms and means of education, because they shape us as representatives of our nation and set us apart in the context of universality. What we truly lack today and what is not taking shape in this generation— Young in terms of education—it is this sense of ethnic identity" (Ianioglo & Vlah, 2025). In fact, ethnopedagogy offers solutions for a harmonious education based on respect, continuity, and a sense of belonging to a community. Tradition must be an integral part of a person's development; it must not be allowed to die out. It helps us define ourselves. Only by knowing who we are, where we come from, and what makes us who we are can we truly understand our own worth. The national and the universal are two aspects of education that are dialectically interrelated through *biological*, *psychological*, and *pedagogical* factors. One cannot educate an abstract human being, but rather a person who belongs to one nation or another. Every nation has its own ideal of what a human being should be, which becomes the ultimate goal of education. In light of the above, we note that folk pedagogy promotes an understanding of the people's educational experience, which allows capitalizing on the pedagogical culture of the contemporary generation, bringing together various functions, factors, methods, and forms of human personality formation and development, Since the effectiveness of folk pedagogical ideas constantly encourages creative activity in the modern educational process. Popular education is, in fact, social education, given that throughout history, human beings have been—and continue to be—both the object and the subject of education. The educational experience accumulated over the centuries, combined with empirical knowledge shaped by real-life experience, forms the core of folk pedagogy. "Homo sapiens" is the human being who is capable of learning and who educates others; it is the being endowed with morality, characterized by an awareness of the act of work. Humans think, speak, and act; they are the only beings capable of understanding the purpose of education and of advancing it to the level of mutual education and self-education, (Buzenco, 2017). Upon reviewing the literature, we observe that the authors refer to two concepts: folk pedagogy and ethnopedagogy. We believe it is necessary to clarify these concepts: **ethnopedagogy** is the **science that studies**, theorizes, preserves, and integrates this folk pedagogy into the modern education system (school, family, community). Whereas folk pedagogy represents the raw material (the totality of ideas, beliefs, crafts, proverbs, fairy tales), and child-rearing practices stories created and passed down empirically, from generation to generation, by a people. *Folk pedagogy is the subject of study in ethnopedagogy;* without the practices and the folkloric heritage accumulated by Without the people, ethnopedagogy would have nothing to analyze. *Ethnopedagogy preserves and adapts folk pedagogy.* In a globalized world,

traditional customs tend to disappear: ethnopedagogy brings them out of the museum and reintroduces them into schools as methods of moral, aesthetic, and environmental education. It is important to note that ethnopedagogy and folk pedagogy share common methods. Both are based on the community's fundamental values, such as: *humanity, order, respect for parents and elders, a love of work,* and a commitment to truth and goodness. Popular pedagogy is the pedagogy of the masses, a universal pedagogy—common to all, but not just to specialist educators/professionals. What is important in our view is that all the educational methods and practices developed over the centuries by a people form the foundation for shaping the character of the younger generation. As the title of this study suggests (*The Dimensions of Ethnopedagogy*…), We are called upon to analyze the concept as well as the term "valence," which was borrowed from chemistry and Latin. According to primary sources, "valentia" means strength, ability, and value. Just like many Other concepts and their implications have been adopted and adapted in numerous other fields, including pedagogy, psychology, linguistics, and others. In its broadest sense, the term refers to "*the ability of an element to combine with, interact with, or produce a certain effect*." in relation to other elements (dex). Analyzed from a pedagogical perspective We identify the following meaning: "the potential for learning, or the educational value, of a subject, a method, a concept, or a phenomenon." It is precisely this educational value that we focus on in the present study. When we refer to "valences" in *ethnopedagogy*, we are referring to its virtues, potential, and capabilities *formative* approaches to contribute to the comprehensive development of both students and teachers. Thus, the aspects of ethnopedagogy find a profound theoretical resonance in the work of C. Cucoș (2014) as well as Professor N. Silistraru and others. The formative aspects of ethnopedagogy represent the educational and moral resources that folk pedagogy provides contributes to the harmonious development of the personality. In the process of initial training and In the ongoing professional development of teachers, ethnopedagogy is not merely a look back at the past, but rather a modern methodological tool for fostering students' sense of identity. Below is a summary of the key aspects of ethnopedagogy:

❖ **intercultural and inclusive dimension:** according to this dimension, the teacher learns to respect and embrace the ethnic and cultural diversity in the classroom, creating an inclusive learning environment. Developing cultural empathy and discovering the universality of values: These are just a few examples of what this aspect has to offer. Promoting diversity in schools puts into practice the principle that *every child comes to school with a wealth of cultural knowledge,* which must be recognized and incorporated into the educational process. And the teacher serves as

a facilitator of intercultural dialogue, building bridges between children from different backgrounds (Cucoș, 2014).

❖ **ethical and moral dimension** (shaping the teacher's moral character): ethnopedagogy provides a framework of profound values *(kindness, decency, order, respect for elders/mentors*). A highly qualified teacher is a moral role model in his or her own right (the model of personal example in traditional pedagogy). And professional ethics, with its traditional ethical values (fairness, duty), complements the modern code of professional ethics, providing teachers with a strong moral foundation for managing conflicts or dilemmas in the classroom. Ethical and moral values bridge the community norms of the past with today's needs for personal development, transforming the act educational—from a simple transfer of knowledge to a profound process of character development.

❖ **methodological and creative aspects:** traditions, folklore (proverbs, fairy tales, riddles, crafts) become innovative teaching resources. Teachers learn to translate these into active, participatory methods (role-playing, thematic projects, educational discussions). This aspect challenges educators to become *designers of learning experiences,* transforming ancient practices into modern teaching techniques. A teaching workshop can transform a traditional review lesson into a collaborative format (similar to project-based learning), where students work in teams, debate, engage in hands-on activities, or complete assignments in a relaxed, community-oriented atmosphere. In this way, the teacher diversifies their teaching strategy by introducing non-formal methods into a formal setting, and the student stimulates their imagination, divergent thinking, and originality in problem-solving. Its methodological and creative value demonstrates that ethnopedagogy does not imply monotony or a fixation on the past, but rather represents an inexhaustible source of pedagogical innovation, through which teaching becomes more engaging, more intuitive, and more grounded in students' lived experiences.

❖ **psycho-pedagogical significance** (understanding the student's psychological profile): Understanding the ethnic makeup of the community (e.g., the concept of "Mioritic space" in L. Blaga) It helps teachers better understand the behavior, learning styles, and motivation of students from that cultural context. From an educational perspective, this matrix explains certain psychological traits of students: their attachment to nature, melancholy, but also a spirit of adaptability. The teacher does not evaluate the student in isolation, but rather through the lens of his or her sociocultural context, thereby avoiding mislabeling. Thus, through effective communication, students find meaning in their learning when what they study in

school is not disconnected from the reality of their family and community (Blaga, 1985).

❖ **identity and patriotism:** it strengthens self-awareness, a sense of belonging to a cultural community, and respect for the local language, history, and traditions. The identity- and patriotism-related significance of ethnopedagogy (Silistraru, 2006) provides "the link between the individual and the community, transforming traditional values and historical memory into fundamental tools for shaping national consciousness and a sense of belonging to the homeland".

❖ **affective-motivational aspect:** the use of stories, folk songs, rituals, and traditional games fosters empathy, emotional intelligence, and a sense of belonging to a group. This aspect focuses on emotional engagement and fostering an intrinsic interest in learning, through a warm, welcoming, and culturally meaningful educational environment. In traditional pedagogy, the learning process has never been viewed as a cold or externally imposed task, but rather as a natural communal experience, filled with affection and supported by playful and motivational elements. In this capacity, the teacher learns to be more than just a conveyor of content, but rather an *emotional catalyst* that connects the student's mind with their heart, while humor and folklore serve as motivational resources.

○ **ecological value** (a state of harmony with nature): community education promotes a sustainable lifestyle based on respect for the environment and resursele naturale, principiu reluat astăzi de educația ecologică modernă. According to Professor N. Silistraru (2021), ethnopedagogy includes an important ecological dimension, through which human beings are "educated in the spirit of respect for the environment and harmonious coexistence with nature, drawing on the traditions and ecological norms of the traditional community". As we can infer from the findings of the study, ethnopedagogy examines the empirical experience of communities in educating the younger generation through: *traditions* passed down from generation to generation*; folklore,* where stories, proverbs, riddles, and songs serve a moralizing purpose; *games* in which traditional play activities develop social and physical skills. It is also worth mentioning the holidays, which are community rituals that convey spiritual and identity-related values, and of course, *work,* which integrates children into the family's household activities from an early age. While in traditional society child labor was viewed as a necessity for economic survival, today, it is an educational resource that fosters discipline, resilience, respect for others' efforts, and independence. Professor N. Silistraru (2021) is the author who has structured and

elaborated on the subject most effectively **the functions of ethnopedagogy** in his specialized treatises. Thus, we identify**:**

o **the axiological (value-based) function:** transmitting the community's value system and grounding students in the cultural life of their people.

o **he formative-educational function:** shaping character, moral conduct, and spiritual development through folk role models.

o **the informational-cognitive function:** the transmission of empirical knowledge about the world, nature, crafts, and society accumulated by previous generations.

o **the integrative-social (inclusive) function:** the child's integration into community life and the development of social skills and a sense of solidarity.

o **the function of cultural preservation and transmission (identity):** preserving the ethnocultural heritage and historical memory from one generation to the next.

o **the ecological function:** fostering respect for the environment and living in harmony with nature. We note that these functions work together in the process of personality development and are utilized both in informal education (within the family), as well as in formal education (school/preschool). By analyzing the definitions, connotations, and functions provided by the authors, Ethnopedagogy is viewed on three major *levels*:

✓ *a source of knowledge (folk pedagogy)*—which preserves the empirical experience, proverbs, stories, and parables historically used by the people for educational purposes;

✓ *identity-building*—which shapes a child's self-awareness and sense of ethnic belonging by incorporating traditional values;

✓ *integrative scientific field*—draws on concepts from sociology, ethnography, and psychology to adapt modern teaching methods to the cultural specificities of students. The author, S. Baciu (2007), points out that, from the perspective of the traditional community, the need the role of education in the process of a person's development as a human being has been an indisputable axiom, a fundamental truth vividly reflected in popular proverbs and sayings. K. Ushinsky's pedagogical system, which is also part of this context, is guided by the principle known as "the popular character of education." "Education created by the people and based on ethnic principles," writes the scholar, "possesses that educational power, which do not exist even in the most perfect systems." The author is convinced that it is the task

of pedagogy to harness and translate this rich source into effective educational tools. In the work "Man as the Object of Education: An Experience in Pedagogical Anthropology," K. Ushinsky (1998) states and argues that "children must be introduced to the values of the people through local and national traditions.". For these reasons, every ethnic culture, concerned with the spiritual development of future generations, is making greater efforts to ensure that children are educated in accordance with cultural traditions, the historical traditions of parents, grandparents, and ancestors. In this sense, folk pedagogy is an inexhaustible "treasure trove" of "folk wisdomwhich" educates children in the spirit of national and universal human values. The thinker B. P. Hașdeu emphasized: "all the human sciences have their roots in the people, who were the first philosophers, the first historians, the first physicians, and the first astronomers." This perspective reflects the epistemological value of folk knowledge and justifies the need to incorporate it into the modern educational system. To incorporate this heritage into teaching practice, it is essential that initial and continuing teacher training be focused on the following strategic areas:

1). The inclusion (where it is not already included) of the Ethnopedagogy module/course in university curricula, to provide future educators with the theoretical and methodological frameworks necessary for integrating ethnocultural values into the educational process.

To complement initial training, the continuing education component for teachers must be grounded in practical applications and modern approaches, through:

2). Development of training programs focused on the design of transdisciplinary activities: the integration of ethnocultural resources at the intersection of disciplines (for example, interdisciplinary modules combining History, Romanian Language and Literature, and the Arts), facilitating a holistic understanding of cultural identity. At the same time, the use of experiential learning techniques makes use of hands-on activities such as school gatherings and workshops Traditional crafts and games transform folklore from a mere subject of study into a firsthand experience for students. Similarly, partnerships between schools, museums, and the community (school-based museum education) are necessary.

2. Conclusion

At the conclusion of this study, we can state that ethnopedagogy is a field with vast potential for addressing issues related to the objectives of the contemporary school

by drawing on local educational traditions, which can complement the content of the school curriculum. Ethnopedagogy, as a distinct field of study, explains folk pedagogy and proposes ways to apply it in contemporary society. The integration of ethnopedagogy into teacher training ensures that the school remains a vibrant environment, where contemporary pedagogical innovation is grounded in a solid foundation of values.

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